

V. REMARKS

Claims 13-16 are provisionally rejected on the grounds of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable claims 1-4 of copending Application No. 10/644,955. The claims are canceled and, as a result, the rejection as applied thereto is now moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 13-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Nishikawa (JP Publication No. 2000-300729). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

In the present invention, the electronic shutter 22 and the image display unit 21 are disposed in front of reels 24L, 24C, and 24R, as described in paragraph 0149 of the specification and as shown in Fig. 2. On the other hand, in Nishikawa, the liquid crystal panel 33 is disposed in front of reels 24, as shown in Fig. 3.

In Nishikawa, a single component (i.e., crystal panel 33) not only executes the display of various images, but also shields the reels. Thus, it is difficult to display images effectively.

However, in the present invention, the image display unit 21 displays various images, and the electronic shutter 22 shields the necessary display areas. The electronic shutter 22 is disposed between the image display unit 21 and reels 24L, 24C, and 24R. Therefore, an effect mode can be achieved, in which reel symbols are mixed with an image effect. In particular, (i) the shielding device is controlled so that the area of the variable display device (reel) to be stopped is visible and the area of other variable display devices varying the symbols are shielded; (ii) the shielding device is controlled so that the whole area of the variable displace devices are shielded and the attraction device is controlled to display a predetermined image, when an erroneous stopping operation is

performed; and, (iii) the shielding device is controlled so that the symbols on the variable display devices of the prize-winning combination are visible and the other symbols are shielded, and the attraction device is controlled to display a predetermined image, after all of the variable display devices have stopped varying the symbols.

In addition, when an effect is displayed with the electronic shutter in the shielding state, since no extraneous background is visible and the electronic shutter serves as a reflector as well, a clearer image effect can be achieved.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper because the applied art fails to teach each and every element of claim 17, as amended. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the applied art fails to teach an attraction display device for displaying an attraction image with the attraction display being disposed in front of the shielding device and an attraction control device for controlling the shielding device to be in at least one of a transmissive state such that a symbol on the variable display device is visually recognizable and a shielding state such that a symbol on the variable display device is not visually recognizable, and for controlling the attraction display device. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claim 17 is allowable over the applied art.

Claims 13-16 are cancelled and, as a result, the rejection as applied thereto is now moot.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

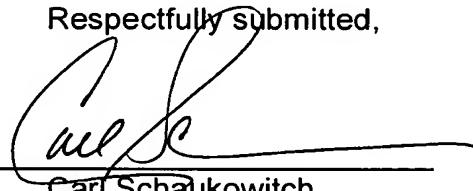
The newly-added claims also include features not shown in the applied art. Further, Applicants assert that there are also reasons other than those set forth above why the pending claims are patentable. Applicants hereby reserve the right to submit those other reasons and to argue for the patentability of claims not explicitly addressed herein in future papers.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: May 8, 2007

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Enclosure(s): Amendment Transmittal

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